

PRIORITIES AND THEMES SUMMARY

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Transportation Investment Forums Summary of Priorities and Themes “What we have learned so far”

As Idaho develops its long-range transportation vision, it becomes increasingly clear that making wise transportation investments is critical and determining how to make those decisions is challenging.

The following goals and key themes were among those expressed during a recent series of *Transportation Investment Forum* meetings held throughout the state and attended by a variety of transportation partners representing Idaho's rural and urban areas. These ongoing discussions are intended to help build a foundation for meeting Idaho's future transportation needs and investing transportation dollars wisely.

COMMON GOALS

- Ensure safety and security in travel, decreasing the risk of injury or property damage on, in and around transportation facilities.
- Take care of the existing system of roads, bridges, public transportation, aviation, passenger rail and ports.
- Relieve congestion to ensure the smooth flow of people and goods throughout the entire system.
- Broaden access to opportunities and essential services for those who cannot or choose not to drive.
- Facilitate the efficient movement of goods using all modes of transportation.
- Ensure Idaho's continued economic competitiveness by providing a safe, reliable and efficient transportation system.
- Protect Idaho's environment and natural resources by making investments that are not only sensitive to the environment, but that also provide and encourage environmentally beneficial transportation choices.
- Enhance the quality-of-life in our communities through transportation.

April 28 Break Out Session Results

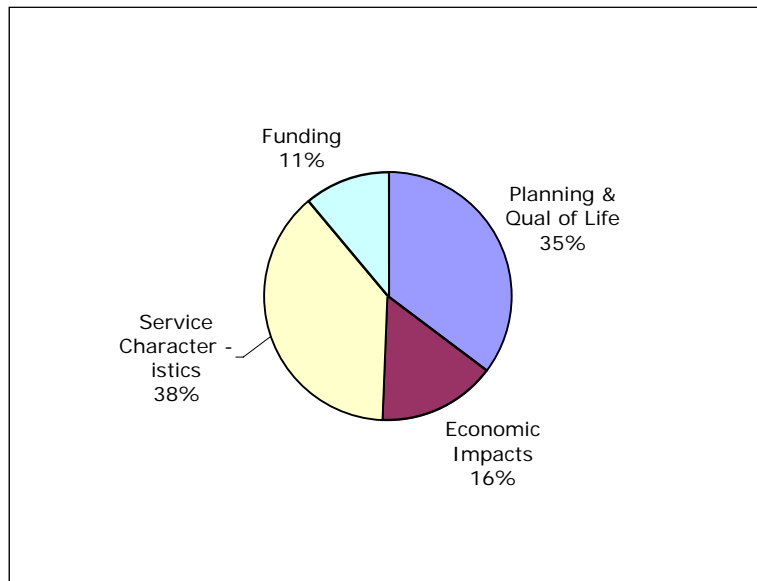
Three breakout groups with approximately 11 participants each met during the afternoon of April 28, 2005 to identify priorities in planning Idaho's transportation future.

In order to insure all participants had a chance to share their input, this meeting used a nominal group technique in which participants worked alone in generating an initial list of priorities. Participants then shared the top three items on their list with the group. The items were discussed and written on newsprint. A total of 36 participants each selected three top priorities, yielding a total of 106 possible votes for any single priority. Individuals were not allowed to cast multiple votes for the same topic.

Chart 1

Percentage of votes by issue.

Chart 1 illustrates the priorities along three general themes: Planning and Quality of Life, Economic Impacts, Transportation System Characteristics, and Funding Issues. The top two categories, Transportation System Characteristics and Planning/Quality of Life Issues, received 73% of the possible votes. Transportation System Characteristics included safety, multi-modal transportation solutions and effective supporting infrastructure (water, sewers, etc.). Planning/Quality of Life Issues focused on linking land use to the transportation system, coordination of long-term plans, and quality of life for Idaho citizens. The table on the next page lists the specific topics generated under each category.



The 32 priority topics identified by the group are listed below along with the number of participants voting for each topic.

Issue	Topics	Total Votes for Topic
Planning & Quality of Life Issues	Total for this issue:	38 of 106 possible
	Land use linked to transportation system	10
	Long-term plan/growth (coordinated plans)	7
	Quality of life	3
	Environmental impact (air quality)	3
	Environmental impact (air/water quality)	2
	Right project or solution	2
	Sustainability	2
	Address needs of all people	2
	Regional significance/community values	2
	Historical preservation	2
	Population – system use (changing demographics)	2
	Balance reality with vision	1
Economic Impacts	Total for this issue:	17 of 106 possible
	Cost/Benefit	7
	Economic Growth	6
	Facilitate commerce	2
	Rural Economic development	2
Service Characteristics	Total for this issue:	41 of 106 possible
	Safety	17
	Multi-modal solution	5
	Infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.)	4
	Multiple uses of same infrastructure/right of way	3
	Congestion relief	3
	Statewide system (circulation)	3
	Public transit	2
	Transportation corridors (N to S, E to W)	1
	Acceptable level of service	1
	Secondary & feeder roads for rural development	1
	Move freight to rail – efficient freight movement	1
Funding Issues	Total for this issue:	12 of 106 possible
	How to Pay—Funding	8
	Leverage federal funds (Medicaid and Public Transit)	2
	Transportation users pay for system	1
	Available resources for construction	1

KEY THEMES and RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation & Prioritization

Attendees want to know *who* will be involved in the short-term and long-term planning and prioritization of Idaho's transportation systems. They feel past planning has been dominated by an engineering perspective. There is also a heavy focus on separating "wants" from "needs" and understanding the struggle between back-logged projects and new projects needed to create infrastructures to support Idaho's burgeoning growth.

Need for Transportation Education & "Buy-In"

Attendees agree that Idaho citizens and other stakeholders in Idaho's future will need to be educated on the state's long-term vision for transportation and ultimately its funding. The perpetual question of "what's in it for me" will need to be answered and measurable results put into place.

Multi-Modality

Participants insist that a variety of public and private transportation modes be considered as part of Idaho's long-term transportation plan (i.e., rail, port, public transit, pedestrian, bicycle), and that "non-road" solutions be given greater consideration.

Growth

Population growth and changing demographics are an issue of concern for both rural and urban transportation planners. They fear they could easily over-estimate or under-estimate the growth projections in their respective regions over the next 30-35 years.

Economic Development

The need to preserve and grow Idaho's presence as an easily accessible commerce center is key to attracting profitable businesses to Idaho.

Environmental Impact

Air and water quality continue to be of vital concern in both urban and rural areas of Idaho. Evolving emissions standards and new technologies designed to limit the impact of transportation on the environment are of great interest.

Transportation Research and Technology Transfer

Attendees expressed great optimism regarding ongoing transportation research and new technologies which might help revolutionize several aspects of Idaho's transportation system, potentially resulting in cost-savings, increased efficiency, improved safety, environmental protection, etc.

Recreational Access & Tourism

Participants stressed that access to areas intended for hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor recreational activities be maintained in order to preserve quality-of-life and attract tourism dollars.

Funding & Sustainability

The funding and financial sustainability of Idaho's transportation systems are a key concern. Participants feel that funding for operations and maintenance are often overlooked when transportation projects are funded. Attendees also see the need to pursue innovative, non-traditional funding sources.